

won't proceed and produce a report and the Congress won't vote on it no matter what.

Q. —Stevens says that you are holding up the whole investigation to get the budget over with.

The President. Well, you know that's not true, don't you?

Q. Well, of course, I know that's not true. We have to ask.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:07 p.m. at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders July 27, 1993

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, are these your "delay in gridlock" friends?

The President. These are my friends. This group had always supported an aggressive approach to deficit reduction, the balanced approach.

Middle East Peace Talks

Q. Are you sure?

Why is Secretary Christopher coming back?

The President. Because I want to talk with him about the Middle East before he goes there.

Q. Do you think the peace process is in jeopardy, sir?

The President. Well, I hope not. I certainly have no reason to believe that it is, but obviously I'm concerned about it. I think the Syrians have shown commendable restraint so far. And I don't think we should let Hezbollah and all these groups that don't want anything good to happen in the Middle East derail the peace process by what they do. I don't think we should, any of us, should allow that. I mean, I really want something to happen there. So I'm very hopeful. But I thought that in view of the events there, that he ought to come home, and we ought to have a conversation about it before he goes to the Middle East.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:20 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Immigration Policy

July 27, 1993

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to say a special word of thanks to the large number of Members of Congress who are here today. I think I have the entire list. If I don't, the Vice President will amend it when I finish. But I see Senator Kennedy, Senator Simon, Senator Feinstein, Senator Boxer, Senator Graham and Congressmen Brooks, Mazzoli, Schumer, Bryant, Fish, Kennedy, Lantos and Gilman. I think that's every Member of Congress here. Did I miss anyone? I missed Congressman Gallegly; I'm sorry.

Several weeks ago, I asked the Vice President to work with our Departments and Agencies to examine what more might be done about the problems along our borders. I was especially concerned about the growing problems of alien smuggling and international terrorists hiding behind immigrant status, as well as the continuing flow of illegal immigrants across American borders.

Following several weeks of intense efforts, including his personal involvement in resolving the recent alien smuggling incident with Mexico, the Vice President presented me with a report spelling out what we might do. I have reviewed that report and approved it. We have spoken to Members of Congress, including those who are here today and others. I want to particularly acknowledge Senator Kennedy, Senator Simpson, Congressmen Brooks and Mazzoli for all their work on this issue over many, many years. We're also in debt to Senators Feinstein and Boxer for their aggressive work in trying to deal with the growing problem, especially in the State of California, and I want to state publicly how much I appreciate the work the Hispanic Caucus has done to ensure that a balanced approach is adopted in dealing with this issue.